

Leslie Hogan 8/17/07

Thoughts regarding how to prioritize guidelines for sidewalks:

1. I like the idea of having 2 kinds of sidewalk priority plans in place, one being the main connecting roads, the other addressing the smaller roads that have the most potential pedestrian use which are unsafe to walk without sidewalks.

2. As I mentioned at the last meeting, I am a big supporter of having all the major routes, 119/2A, Rt 27, Rt 111 fully sidewalked. I noticed on a master plan of many years ago that this was considered a priority as well. As Great Road (119/2A) has become more and more populated with residents, some who do not drive or maybe do not have access to a car, I feel this need has become critical. We add more and more stores and restaurants for people to patronize, we talk about encouraging people to walk more and use their cars less, yet we don't provide safe sidewalks on a road which probably has the most stores and most dense population in all of Acton. And there will be something like 300 apartments coming at some point when the Avalon complex comes to the Nagog area. There is now the possibility of housing at Quail Ridge too.

I would like to see continuous sidewalks on Great Rd as the #1 priority in the "Main Road" part of the plan. I am assuming the piece of Main St (Rt 27) between Post Office Square and Great Rd is already going forward sometime Fall 2007 or spring 2008. If we have a clean slate to work with, I would put Great Road a priority over the northern part of Rt 27 in terms of pedestrian use and safety concerns.

3. Regarding the smaller roads in town, I agree that we need to have a set of very clear guidelines in order for roads to be prioritized. Things like volume of current pedestrians (walking to the commuter rail, schools, shops, etc.), safety of road (is it narrow and windy with lots of trees vs. wide and open), what is the volume of vehicles. And then there is the issue of landowners giving permission for sidewalks to be constructed on their property.

4. Also, should we proactively look for public opinion when we construct sidewalks? For example, there were some strong opinions from residents, mainly regarding trees, that caused the piece of Main St sidewalk that was due to be constructed this summer to be delayed. As a town committee which allows public attendance, can we just decide how and where sidewalks will go, or do we need to give the public notice and time to comment ahead of time. If this is the case, then we should try to do this early on so we can avoid unexpected delays.